
Title: RITES OF CREMATION

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Let this book serve as a
guide to those who follow
me in the honorable
profession of cremator to
the finest warriors in all
the lands known to
mankind, the fine fighters
of Monitor! Most of this
will become known during
thine apprenticeship, but
these written words will
serve to bolster that
which thy predecessor will
be teaching thee.

The most important thing
thou canst learn of thy
profession is this: being a
cremator is no less
honorable or worthy a
duty than taking up
sword and shield and
doing battle with goblins,
trolls, and all the other
uncivilized fiends that
populate our land. I put
to any doubters this
question: where would a
warrior be if he knew
that, should he die
valiantly in battle, his
body would not be
brought back to receive a
proper cremation? That
his body, primed and
trained for war in life,
should feed the carrion
cowards who would rather
flee than fight, or
perhaps a meal for the
wives of those foul
beings who struck him
down? He would be in the
rear of the force, hoping
that he returns home;
worried more for his life
than guiding his blade
through the hearts of his

enemies.

I have shown thee the worth of thy profession; now I will reveal to thee the import of burning one's body, as opposed to the primitive practice of burial. Thou hast known from the day thy first words were spoken that there is mystical power in the ashes of the dead. 'Tis true, and thou dost know this from thy Test of Knighthood. Ashes are the soul of a man; his spirit is locked within the remains of his lifeless body, and burning it releases the spirit from its imprisonment. If this is not done, the spirit will go insane and rise up as a monster -- lifeless, yet hateful and vengeful and animated. The spirit is in torment. This is no way for a courageous knight to spend eternity. For such a reason, the cremator is a respected and honored member of our stout city.

The question arises that, after the body is cremated (the method is described in detail in a later chapter), where must the ashes be stored? Fortune and wisdom on the part of our forefathers have placed us in a land whereby an opening in the great mountains to the west can serve as catacombs; a tomb for the courageous dead. It seems that these were once daemon lands, as evidenced by the ruins in the northwest, but more definitively by the catacombs. Therein, coffins and dusty tapestries hold their

unburned dead. No doubt
the place is naught but
ruins because the
maddened corpses did rise
up and wreak their
vengeance on the fools...